Translating Humor from English into Arabic for Subtitling

ترجمة الفكاهة على شاشة التلفزيون من الانجليزية إلى العربية

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1989

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Translation in the Department of Translation Yarmouk University

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May 6th 2013

To my loving and supportive parents,

To my brothers and sisters,

To everyone who has supported me,

I dedicate this work

Acknowledgments

First, I thank God Who has guided me through the difficulties and obstacles I faced during the study.

Gratitude and thanks go to my supervisor Professor Yousef Bader for his patience, encouragement and guidance. His comments were so invaluable and without them along with his assistance, the study would not have seen light in this final form. Through his relentless patience, efforts and constructive comments, I managed to finish this thesis.

Also special thanks go to the examining committee for their invaluable and enriching remarks and comments through the master's prgramme and in the making of this thesis.

Last but not least, I thank my family for their motivation and support, my colleagues and administration at Jordan Radio and Television Corporation for their support and encouragement.

Abstract

Haddad, Victoria Sami. Translating Humor from English into Arabic for Subtitling, Master of Arts in Translation. Department of Translation, Yarmouk University, 2013. (Supervisor Professor Yousef Bader)

This study aims to investigate the translatability of humor for subtitling on television. Excerpts chosen from humorous television programmes, movies, and cartoons have been viewed and analyzed to determine the kind of humor they exhibit, and choose suitable strategies and techniques to translate them. The data has been analyzed in relation to the pragmatic theories and principles namely speech acts, Grician Maxims, as presented by Grice (1975) and Austin (1962, 1979).The study has presented the different kinds of difficulties and constraints the subtitler faces when translating television programmes, specially the humorous genre which adds to the dilemma and puts the subtitler face to face with three major problems that need to be dealt with: translation, subtitling, and humor.

The analysis has also applied the theories of humor presented by Raskin(1985) and Attardo(1994) with reference to Grice's Maxims, to the chosen discourse, and a proposed translation from English into Arabic has been presented by the researcher. Finally the translations have been analyzed to determine their success in rendering the original message of the humorous utterances, within the space and time allowed by the process of subtitling.

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Chapter One
Introduction and Theoretical Background

I.1 Introduction

This study aims to investigate the translatability of humor for subtitling on television. The discourse used comprises of selected humorous excerpts taken from programmes of different genres such as films, animated TV series and sitcoms.

Television stations transmit different kinds of programmes of different genres, such as news, comedies, drama, and documentaries. The humorous programmes that are transmitted on television provide us with a rich discourse that can be used to investigate the translatability of humor in subtitling.

Everyday viewers are exposed to the programmes aired on television stations in languages different from the national language of the countries and the people, where those channels are received. This fact raises the need for translating those programmes into a language other than the original language in which they were produced to enable the viewers from other countries and cultures who do not speak the language of the programme to understand them and enjoy the production.

Therefore, those stations would need to translate the foreign programmes to transmit in the most suitable way for the targeted group of each programme and for the station in the framework of a specific set of standards, accordingly, deciding the best method for translating them.

In relation to the choice of the suitable method for translating films, TV programmes, and videos on television, Gottlieb (1998:244) divides the countries into four categories:

1) Source language countries, which are English- speaking, and do not usually import programmes in foreign languages and if they do, they subtitle them.
2) Dubbing countries and those are German, Italian, Spanish, and French-speaking countries that mostly use dubbing of the imported programmes into their own language.
3) Voice-over countries, like Russia and Poland
4) Subtitling Countries including non-European communities.

I.2 Translation and Audiovisual Translation

1.2.1 Introduction

Catford (1974:20) defines translation as "Replacement of textual material in one language/SL (source language) by equivalent textual material in another language/TL (target language)".

Newmark (1981) makes a distinction between the different methods of translation and in particular between **semantic** and **communicative** translations as follows:

1) Semantic translation

Semantic translation takes into account the aesthetic value of the language the beautiful and natural sounds of the SL text. It might compromise "meaning' where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetitions jar in the finished version" (ibid). It translates less

important cultural words by culturally neutral or functional terms but not by cultural equivalents and it may make other small concessions to the readership. Semantic' translation is flexible, and accepts creativity allowing for the translator's intuitive understanding of the original. Semantic translation is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, cares for the different nuances of meaning, an aims at concision in order to reproduce pragmatic impact (Newmark (1981).

2) Communicative translation

Communicative translation attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in a way that both content and language are acceptable and comprehensible to the receivers. Communicative translation is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to be simple clear and brief and to under-translate. It is always written in a natural and resourceful style. (ibid).

According to Jacobson (1959, in Venuti and Baker 2000) "the meaning of any linguistic sign is its translation into some further, alternative sign, especially a sign "in which it is more fully developed". He adds that three ways of interpreting a verbal sign may be distinguished so that "it may be translated into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, nonverbal system of symbols" (p. 113). The three kinds of translation are differently labeled as follows:

1) Intralingual translation or *rewording* which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
2) Interlingual translation or *translation proper* which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

3) Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* which is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems.
(Jacobson (1959:113), in (Venuti and Baker, 2000)

Gottlieb (2005:3) asserts that in inter-semiotic translation, the one or more channels of communication used in the translated text differ(s) from the channel(s) used in the original text. In other words, the source and target texts are semiotically non-equivalent. In intra-semiotic translation, the sign systems used in source and target texts are identical, forming a case of semiotic equivalence.

This means that intra-semiotic translation occurs when the source text uses a verbal sign system and the translated text uses the same verbal sign system. Intra-lingual translation is the interpretation of a text within one language, while inter-lingual translation operates with text in two different languages, "resulting in having two messages created by different systems of signs, which are supposed to be equivalent" (Jacobson (1959:113), in (Venuti and Baker, 2000)

1.2.2 Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual translation (AVT) is one of several overlapping umbrella terms that include "media translation", "multimedia translation", "multimodal translation" and "screen translation". Chiaro (2009:141) argues that "these different terms all set out to cover the interlingual transfer of verbal language when it is transmitted and accessed both visually and acoustically, usually, but not necessarily, by means of some kind of electronic device". Chiaro adds that after the introduction of the first talking pictures in the 1920s the translation of movies in order to

make them accessible to speakers of all languages and to find a solution to allow films to circulate despite language barriers became a major concern (Ibid)

Audiovisual translation is also known as screen translation. Gottlieb (2005:13) defines (AVT) as "the translation of transient poly-semiotic texts presented on screen to mass audience", leading to shifting between the different systems of message conveying systems from verbal to written, and from one language into another.

The term screen translation is "a broader term which includes television and video, as well as other products available on screen such as video games, internet, and CD-ROMs" Diaz-Cintas (2003:194). Taking into account the numerous ways of conveying messages, Gambier and Gottlieb (2001) use the broader term (Multimedia Translation) instead.

Chiaro (2009:141) asserts that AVT is not restricted to cinema theaters alone. It applies to any appliance which has a screen and that is able to send audiovisual material that needs to be translated into different languages. Yet, for the purpose of the current study, the term will be used to refer to translation for television.

1.3 Types of Audiovisual Translation

The typologies established by Diaz-Cintas (1999) distinguish between many types of multilingual transfer in the field of audiovisual communication including: **Dubbing**, **Voice-over**, **and Subtitling**. Following is a brief definition each of the three mentioned modes of audiovisual translation:

1.3.1 Dubbing:

Dubbing involves replacing the original soundtrack containing the actors' dialogue with a target language (TL) recording that reproduces the original message, while at the same time ensuring that the TL sounds and the actors' lip movements are more or less synchronized, in such a way that target viewers are led to believe that the actors on screen are actually speaking their language. (Diaz Cintas, 2003:195).

1.3.2 Voice-over

This kind of AV Translation involves reducing the volume of the original soundtrack completely, or to a minimal auditory level, in order to ensure that the translation, which is superimposed on the original soundtrack, can be easily heard. It is common practice to allow a few seconds of the original speech before reducing the volume and superimposing the translation. The reading of the translation finishes a few seconds before the end of the original speech, allowing the audience to listen to the voice of the person on the screen at a normal volume once again. (ibid)

1.3.3 Subtitling:

When the decision has been taken to keep the original soundtrack and to switch from the spoken to the written mode, by adding text to the screen, the technique is known as subtitling. Diaz Cintas and Anderman, (2009:19)

Georgakopoulou (2009:21) argues that interlingual subtitling is a type of language transfer in which the translation, that is the subtitles, "do not replace the original Source Text (ST), but rather, both are present in synchrony in the subtitled version" (ibid).

Gottlieb (1992:162) defines subtitling as" a written, additive, immediate, synchronous, and poly-medial translation". He argues that subtitling is a unique kind of screen translation because it is written not spoken as in the other kinds, it is additive because it is added to the original production maintaining the source language discourse, it is immediate because it is presented with the other discourses in the programme or film beyond the control of the viewers, it is synchronous because the original verbal part of the original programme and the subtitling are both presented simultaneously, and it is polymedial because two parallel channels are used to present the original message of the programme. Gottlieb (1992:162).

Following Jakobson's (1959: 233) interpretation of the different modes of translation, subtitling is considered both interlingual and intersemiotic translation. It is interlingual because it is an "interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language". Subtitling is also intersemiotic because it transfers an oral verbal language of the source text into written verbal language in the target language.

Rosa (2001:213) argues that "Subtitling is multi-channel and multi-code": made up of verbal signs and of non-verbal signs – such as visible and audible gestures. She states that subtitling involves the following features:

1) A change of medium: from speech and gestures (both visual and audible), to writing.
2) A change of channel: from vocal-auditive to visual.
3) A change of the form of signals: mainly from phonic substance to graphic.

4) A change of code: from spoken verbal language (and non-verbal language to written verbal language

Rosa (2001:213-214)

1.4 The Pragmatics of (Audiovisual) Translation

Hatim and Mason (1997: vi) indicate that all kinds of acts of translating are looked upon as essentially "acts of communication" in the same sense as that which applies to other kinds of verbal interaction. They argue that "Typically, a translator operates on the verbal record of an act of communication between source language speaker/writer and target language hearer/reader and seeks to relay perceived meaning values to a (group of) target language receiver(s) as a separate act of communication".

Crystal (1997:120) asserts that "pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others". He adds that in theory we can say anything, we can even tell a joke during a funeral for example, but in real life we "follow a large number of social rules" that constrain the way we speak to other people in different situations. The same set of norms has the similar constraints on the writing and signing behavior in language, and that this behavior is different from one language to another. In order to achieve a successful communication process (translation being part of it), communicators (translators) need to follow certain norms that are related to particular concepts.

To relate this to the current study we can argue that any violation of Grice's maxims can trigger humor.

When it comes to translation, Blum-Kulka (1981), cited in Hatim (1998:180), argues that, in their attempt to achieve "sameness of meaning" translators constantly attempt to re-perform locutionary and illocutionary acts in the hope that the end product will have the same perlocutionary force in the target language. Of course this is bound by linguistic and cultural standards.

Similarly, Gottlieb (1998:247) indicates that" intentions and effects are at the center of attention in subtitling", in order to achieve the translation process' target of equivalence.

Based on the above discussion, in a situation where a person falls down suddenly and someone asks: is there a doctor around? The maxim of quantity can be violated if someone answers: I am a doctor of medicine; I specialized in cardiac diseases in 1989. The maxim of relation can be violated if a person asked about the conditions of weather, starts talking about his day. The maxim of manner is violated if a person tells his friend that he can find the book in the living room, if the friend does not know where the living room is. Finally the maxim of quality is violated if the teacher asks the student why didn't you do your homework?, and the student tells the teacher that he was ill during the weekend and could not do the homework, while in fact he actually went on a trip to Aqaba. The maxim of quality is violated as the statement uttered by the student is not true.

1.5 The Semiotics of Subtitling

Gambier & Gottlieb (2001: xi) assert that the different modes of language transfer in audiovisual media and localization in multimedia make it clear that translation does not end with "text" but with delivery. They add that

"this dynamic view of translation forces us to consider the multi-semiotic dimension of multinational communication of today". To take into consideration the various parameters and constraints which determine the multi-media production, Gottlieb (1998:245) states that the translation goes beyond the language alone, especially in audiovisual translation, where the translator deals with a poly-semiotic movie which has four communication channels:

a) The verbal auditory, including dialogue, background voices, and sometimes lyrics

b) The non-verbal auditory channel, including music, natural sound, and sound effects.

c) The verbal visual channel, including superimposed titles and written signs on the screen.

d) And the non verbal visual channel: picture and flow.

(Gottlieb 1998:245).

Subtitles are said to be most successful when they are less noticed by the viewer. For this to be achieved, they need to be easily readable and as brief as necessary in order not to distract the viewer's attention from the programme Diaz Cintas and Anderman (2009:21). So, what are the techniques used to make subtitles successful and as unnoticed as possible? And what is the subtitler's role to achieve this purpose? The answers to these questions can be found if we take a closer look at the constraints of subtitling.

Georgakopoulou (2009: pp 21-24) gives a thorough description of the constraints that the subtitler faces during the process of subtitling. These include technical, textual, and linguistic constraints.

1.6 Constraints of Subtitling

The concept of constrained translation has sometimes been used as a label to brand any variety of translation that forced the unwilling theorist to consider the important role of nonverbal elements, including the translation of songs and comics. It refers to situations in which the text to be translated as part of a more complex communicative event which attempts to convey a message by various means, such as pictures, drawings, music. The translation of the linguistic part is crucially conditioned by the other elements and poses a set of problems that are specific enough to require special attention (Georgakopoulou 2009: pp 21-24).

1.6.1 Technical Constraints

According to Georgakopoulou (2009:21), the technical constraints of Audiovisual Translation include the spatial and temporal constraints and they relate directly to the format of subtitles.

1) **Space**: because of the limited space allowed for a subtitle, no long explanations are used; two lines of text are usually the norm, with specific number of characters per line. (ibid: 22).

2) **Time**:

The length of a subtitle depends on the time they will appear on air. Accurate in and out timing is very important and there should be a balance between the subtitles and the appropriate reading time setting.

3) **Presentation**:

Subtitles usually take up to 20% of screen space. The following factors are Important to make it legible:

1) The size of the characters
2) Their position on screen
3) The technology used for the projection of subtitles on the screen for cinema and TV broadcast, DVD emulation, etc., as it affects their definition. (ibid).

1.6.2 Textual Qualitative Constraints

In subtitling, language transfer operates across two modes, from speech to writing, from the soundtrack to the written subtitles. This shift of mode creates a number of processing and cohesion issues that make it difficult to maintain the filmic illusion in the target product. In subtitling, both source and target texts are present simultaneously, and the viewer of a subtitled programme has at least two different types of information on which to concentrate: the action on the screen, and the translation of the dialogue, that is the subtitles. This adds to the verbal information that might appear in the original programme in the form of inserts and which the viewers have to process through the visual channel, making it more difficult for them to relax and enjoy the programme(ibid:22).

The situation becomes more difficult when the timing of the subtitles is not satisfactorily done. When a subtitle is continued over a shot change, for example, the viewer may think that it is a new subtitle and re-read it, losing precious viewing time.

The temporal succession of subtitles adds to the problem because unlike the linear succession of sentences in a book, it does not allow the eye to move backwards or forwards to clarify misunderstandings, review the basic facts or see what will happen next. This can be done, however,

when watching a film or a programme on video or DVD by using the rewind function.

1.6.3 Linguistic Constraints

The space and time constraints in the subtitling process usually add to traditional translation challenges, such as grammar and word order, as well as problems related to cross-cultural shifts. There is a three-level hierarchy of discourse elements in subtitling:

1) The indispensable elements (that must be translated). The indispensable elements are all the plot-carrying elements of a film
2) The partly dispensable elements (that can be condensed).
3) The dispensable elements (that can be omitted), such as repetitions of names in appellative constructions, and false starts. Some of these elements such as repetitions, padding expressions or even ungrammatical constructions may sometimes be condensed rather than omitted, as they may be relative to the textuality of the programme and the character development of the actors. Other examples of the dispensable elements are expressions followed by gestures to denote salutation, politeness, affirmation, negation, surprise, telephone responses…etc.

1.7 Humor

Raskin (1985:2) asserts that "humor is a universal human trait, and that responding to humor is part of the human behavior". This universality of humor is reinforced by the fact that many jokes or situations will strike surprisingly many, if not all people, as funny (ibid).

The definition of humor ultimately depends on the purpose for which it is used. Attardo (1994:4) points out that in the field of literary criticism, for instance, there is a need for a fine-grained categorization. On the other

hand, linguists have often accepted broader definitions, arguing that whatever evokes laughter or is felt to be funny is humor, which means that humor can be realized by its effect. Yet Attardo (1994:13) asserts that laughter is not necessarily a condition for humor.

Chiaro (2004:150) raised the question whether humor is culture specific and if certain cultures have a higher level of sense of humor that they would understand and interpret humor more than other cultures, or whether poor translation of a comedy programme could result in misinterpretation and loss of meaning.

1.7.1 Theories of Humor

Just as there are many definitions of humor, there are many theories that cover the different aspects of humor. The three major classes of these theories are described in the following section:

a. Incongruity-based Theories.

Raskin, (1985:33) argues that the studies conducted about humor state that it involves *incongruity*. Incongruity-based theories suggest that humor arises from something that violates an expectation. Many supporters of incongruity in humor have emphasized the importance of surprise in a joke that would be delivered by what is called the punch line.

b. Disparagement-based Theory (sometimes called the Superiority Theory)

Disparagement, or Superiority, theories are based on the observation that people laugh at other people’s infirmities, especially if they are enemies (Raskin 1985: 37). This class of theories of humor goes back to Plato's (Philebus: pp.109-111), who maintained that people laugh at the misfortunes of others for joy that they do not share them (Raskin, 1985; Attardo, 1994).

c. Release-based Theory

Release/relief theories explain the link between humor and laughter. The principle for release-based theory is that laughter "provides relief for mental, nervous and/or psychic energy, and this ensures homeostasis after a struggle, tension, and strain" (Raskin, 1985:38-41). Attardo (1994:50) asserts that "the most influential proponent of a release theory is Freud".

d. Script-based Theories

Script-based theories of humor originated within the field of generative grammar (Attardo 1994:195). The most prominent among these is the Semantic Script Theory of Humor proposed by Raskin (1985), and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) as proposed by Attardo (1994).

1. Semantic Script Theory of Humor (SSTH)

The main hypothesis of the Semantic Script Theory of Humor is that "a text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying text if both of the (following) conditions are satisfied:

a. The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts.

b. The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite.

(Raskin 1985:99).

According to Raskin (1985:81), a script is defined as "a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it". This means that all the information, both intralinguistic and extralinguistic, or encyclopedic are included in a lexical unit. Furthermore these scripts are linked with other scripts, forming "semantic networks" (Attardo 1994:201). Raskin(1985:100) uses the following joke to illustrate this point:

"Is the doctor at home?" the patient asked in his bronchial whisper.

No, the doctor's young and pretty wife whispered in reply. Come right in".

According to Raskin, the joke above is (at least partly) compatible with the scripts DOCTOR and LOVER (1985:85) and the opposition between the two scripts could be explained in the following way:" The patient comes to the doctor's house to see the doctor vs. the patient comes to the doctor's house not to see the doctor, but rather to see the doctor's young wife (1985:110).

c. General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH)

Attardo (1994:221) points out that the Semantic Script Theory of Humor is basically a tool for analyzing jokes. He asserts that "the SSTH was developed using jokes as material, and it is intended to apply to jokes. Jokes however are only a limited subset of the types of joke-carrying texts that exist"(ibid). Attardo adds that "the application of the SSTH to text types other than jokes has its problems". In response to this, a revision of the SSTH was presented in a form of a theory called the "General Theory of Verbal Humor"(ibid) Attardo (1994:222) asserts that (GTVH) is supposed to account, in principle, for any type of humorous text.

1.8 The Pragmatics of Humor

Raskin (1985:3) defines the humor act "individual occurrence of a funny stimulus" which he sees as analogous to the speech act term. He adds that there are factors that affect the humor act and contribute to it. Among these factors are the following:

1) The human participant speaker/ hearer and how the perceiver responds to the humor act.
2) A stimulus which means the utterance that is made at a certain situation which develops to create a humorous response to this stimulus.
3) The life experience of an individual that changes his response to humor at different stages of his life.
4) The situational context which would direct and modify the perception of the humor act.
5) The Culture or the society where this humor act occur and the fact the humor is shared by individuals belonging to a certain social group, and share the same values and norms.

Speech Acts, **and Grician Maxims** concepts will be discussed in the following section:

1.8.1 Speech Acts

Austin (1979) points out that speakers do not simply produce sentences that are true or false, but rather perform speech actions such as requests, suggestions, and warnings….etc. He asserts that utterances as part of the interpersonal communication, do not communicate information, but are equivalent to actions. Austin calls these utterances (performatives) seeing them as different from the utterances that convey message (constatives).

Hatim (1998) states that speech acts are those acts that we perform ….when we make a complaint or a request. He adds that the pragmatic analysis of the speech acts sees all utterance as "in terms of dual function of stating and doing things, of having a meaning and a force". (p 179)

According to this, the utterance has three features:

a) a sense or a meaning or a reference to specific events , persons, or objects

b) force which may override literal sense and relay added effects like those associated with a request; and

c) effect on the audience that is gained from that utterance and may or may not be of the kind that is conventionally associated with the linguistic expression or the functional force involved.

Austin (1962) calls these features respectively:

1) locutionary acts: uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense or reference.
2) Illocutionary acts: such as informing, ordering, and warning, i.e. utterance which have force.
3) Perlocutionary acts: what we achieve from saying something like persuading, convincing, misleading …. etc. i.e. effect.

1.8.2 Grice's Maxims

In his Cooperative Principle, Grice says: "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice 1975:45)

To explain these principles Grice proposes the following maxims **(maxims given in quotation marks are in Grice's original wording):** (Grice (1975:45-46)

<u>Maxims of Quantity:</u>

1. "Make your contribution as informative as required."
2. "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required."

Maxims of Quality: Be truthful.

1. “Do not say what you believe to be false".

2. “Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence".

Maxim of Relation:

“Be relevant".

Maxims of Manner: “Be perspicuous.”

1. “Avoid obscurity of expression".

2. “Avoid ambiguity".

3. “Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)".

4. “Be orderly".

According to this, a message must be communicated in the appropriate way to make it comprehensible to the receiver. Otherwise, a violation of a maxim could occur. This violation will distort the message making it incomprehensible.

Vandaele (2002:161) asserts that the receiver would infer the intentions of the speaker from the verbal and non-verbal behavior, using gestures or facial expressions alongside words to finally produce the intended humor.

Antonini (2005:212) explains that "On the screen, humor is conveyed both on a verbal and visual level and consequently it relies both on images and words to fulfill its main intent: make people laugh". This means that on television, different as an audiovisual medium, more than one of semiotic channels is used to convey the intended humorous message.

1.8.3 Conditions for Humor:

Raskin (1985:11-19) surveys different theories and literature concerning the conditions and factors that are present when humor takes place. These conditions can be summarized as follows:

1) a generally cheerful mood in which one is intending to laugh;
2) the use of special devices that may be used by the speaker of humor to put the hearer in appropriate mood of expectations of humor;
3) stimuli which arise from a set of any circumstances that involve odd incongruity. These include any small misfortune or moral deformity, absurdity or indecency, breach of order…..etc;
4) the experiences of the speaker and the hearer that assert humor as a special mode of communication; and
5) the mutual social understanding between the people involved in the humor act which varies according to the degree to which the participants share their social backgrounds.
6)

1.8.4 Forms of Humor

In this section different forms of humor that occur in the scope of the current study are discussed:

1.8.4.1 Word play: Puns

According to Chiaro(1992: 2), "the term word play includes every conceivable way in which language is used with the intent to amuse". Chiaro uses word play as a blanket term that includes double entendres and the works of famous punsters, as well as the most obvious 'containers' of word play, jokes. Chiaro goes on to say that the term word play

"contains an array of conceits ranging from puns and spoonerisms to witticism and funny stories" (ibid: 4).

Gottlieb (1997) asserts that ambiguity is a "central concept" in word play where the listener or reader may have both meaning exposed in one glimpse and he calls this (vertical wordplay), or revealed through repetition within a context triggering the other meaning (horizontal wordplay). This ambiguity arises from the existence of two meanings of the utterance.

Based on Hausman (1974), Gottlieb (1997: 210) suggests the following classification of wordplay:

Table 1: Forms of Wordplay

Type of wordplay	Defining characters	Center features at play
Lexical homonymy	**Two expressions pronounced and spelt the same way**	**Single-word ambiguity**
Collocational homonymy	**ditto**	**Word in context ambiguity**
Phrasal homonymy	**ditto**	**Clause ambiguity**
Homophony	**Two expressions pronounced the same way**	**phonemic ambiguity**
Homography	**Two expressions spelt the same way**	**Graphemic ambiguity**
Paronymy	**Two expressions pronounced or spelt almost in nearly the same way**	**Phonemic or graphemic similarity**

Following is a brief definition of the four forms of word-play.

1) **Homonymy**:

A situation which occurs when two words are identical in spelling and pronunciation, but have a different meaning. For

example, 'saw' meaning looked at, and 'saw' meaning a tool for cutting wood. Ross (1998:9)**;** Longman Dictionary (2002 3rd ed). An example on homonymy comes from the movie (Clue):

Colonel Mustard: You lure men to their deaths like a spider with *flies*.
Mrs. White: *Flies* are where men are most vulnerable.

In this example, the word (flies) has two different meanings: insects and zippers. Both words are spelt and pronounced the same way but have different meanings.

2) **Homophony**

homophones are words pronounced the same but spelt differently which means words which sound alike but are written differently and often have different meanings.

For example, the English words ***no*** and ***know*** are both pronounced the same but spelt differently, and have different meanings. The possibility for confusion can happen only in spoken language, as the two words look quite distinct when written down. Ross (1998:9).

3) Homography:

Homography describes the situation when two words are spelt identically but there is a difference in sound and have different meanings. For example, the English words ***lead*** /liid/ in *Does this road lead to town?* and ***lead*** /led/ in *Lead is a heavy metal,* are homographs. Longman Dictionary (2002 3rd ed)

4) **Paronymy**:

Paronymy occurs when two expressions pronounced or spelt almost in nearly the same way. They share close resemblance, but there are slight differences in both spelling and sound. An example of this can be found in the following excerpt from the Simpsons an episode titled (Lisa the Beauty Queen):

-Homer Simpson, unloved by All

-Homer reads the text aloud, horrified.

-HOMER: Homer Simpson, unloved by Al, no!

Homer notices that he misread the engraving the first time and reads it aloud again, this time correctly.

-HOMER: Homer Simpson, unloved by All, no.

The paronymy in this example is between the pronoun **(all)** and the proper name **(Al)** . In spoken language the two might look the same when read. The humor occurs when Homer the main character in the Series though that Al another character does not love him. His horror get even worse when he finally realized that the word is **All** not **Al** and that now everyone hates him.

1.8.4.2 Irony

Irony is the space between what is meant and what is asserted. Newmark (1993:131), defines irony as "...The often (not always) humorous or sarcastic use of words to imply the opposite of, or some degree of difference from, what they normally mean". Irony could be indicated by tone, or when it is in contradiction with its context or with common sense.

In translation, Newmark (1993) asserts that irony could be "closely translated" when the relevant words have "straight one-to-one Target Language equivalents and when the Source Language and the Target Language Readership (in the case of Television viewers), share the same cultural and educational backgrounds

Anolli et al (2002) call irony "classic witticism" towards someone who has (for example) failed an exam and we say to him "you are a real genius". Usually, the witticism in this kind of example is uttered in a particular intonation.

An example in literature comes from William Shakespeare's Julius Cesar: "Yet Brutus says he was ambitious; and Brutus is an honorable man," which was ironically said by Mark Antony.

1.8.4.3 Parody

Parody can occur where there is incongruity between the content and the style of speech or between particular words used in a given kind of text. Nash (1985:88) states that "The parodist takes care as a rule to create notable discrepancies: both discrepancies of "fit" between expressions and content and discrepancies of style on the place of expression itself." Zabalbeascoa (1996:241) explains this statement by saying "The two types of **discrepancies** mentioned by Nash could be illustrated by the use of formal register in the discussion of a trivial subject and the insertion of colloquial substandard words into a stylistically elevated text, respectively".

Nash (ibid: 87-88), States that "imitation is the essence of parody". He adds that this imitation must be of a specific kind and should be

accessible to other people in their everyday affairs when they "read newspapers, watch TV chat shows or listen to a conversation in shops". The intention to parody should not be clear to avoid failure by the parodist, and the audience is left with all the burden of recognizing the parody intended .Yet the effect of the parody will not be effective, unless the audience is "fully aware of what is being imitated" and "recognize the object of mimicry" (ibid).

Rossen-Knill and Henry (1997:721-740) assert that artists have parodied individuals, groups, institutions, and their actions, beliefs and ideas both to entertain and to offer critical commentary. They indicate that "verbal parody is a highly situated, intentional and conventional speech act which re-presents the object of parody" They add that anything ranging from events, actions, beliefs, thoughts, individuals, to groups, and institutions, can be parodied and represented in a way to criticize that object in a humorous way.

Similarly, Vandaele (2002:155) states that parody can be seen as humor that is provoked by an exaggerated imitation of aesthetic norms.

On screen, some television programmes which ridicule certain political and social events and people can also be considered parodies. An example of this is the "Daily show" with Jon Stewart.

Examples of parody can be seen in different productions of the (Scary Movie) series which ridicule:

1) social affairs like child abuse (Scary movie 3, scary Movie 4 series);
2) other movies productions like "War of the Worlds"," in Scary Movie 4";
3) TV Shows like (Dr Phil); and

4) popular and well known personalities like the President of the United States, Michael Jackson (scary Movie 3, Scary Movie 4)

In this kind of television programmes, there is a discrepancy between style and content like talking in a tone of exaggeration about a simple issue, or showing the appearance and behavior of the characters the parody refers to. The viewers need to have background knowledge (knowledge resources) about the matters or individuals being parodied in order to recognize the allusions and understand the intended sense of mockery and criticism rendering the intended humorous effect.

Nash (1985:92) asserts that "without sufficient knowledge of the actual text, the hearer may also fail to recognize the flaunting (and thus the parody)'.

Chapter two

Literature Review and procedures

2.1 Introduction

This chapter includes only a brief literature review since chapter one has reviewed a large part of the studies conducted in the scope of the current study. The literature review will be presented in the first part of the chapter, while the second part will present the statement of the problem, the data of the study, the significance of the study and the method.

2.2 Literature Review

According to Raphaelson-West, the problems in translating humor can be found on a linguistic level and also on a cultural/universal level Raphaelson-West (1989:130). The author argues that when you attempt to translate humor, the first necessary step would be to analyze the passage you are attempting to translate to determine what type of humor it contains and what makes it funny, then you would be in a better position to decide whether to translate it, and to do that properly. She has divided jokes into three main categories:

1) Cultural jokes (e.g. the ethnic jokes)
2) Universal jokes (the unexpected)
3) Linguistic jokes (e.g. puns)

Shunnaq (1996:105) argues that a joke could be "categorized as linguistic if it cannot be translated spontaneously" and as " pragmatic if it can be

readily translated", and that jokes involving pragmatic ambiguity are easier to be rendered than those involving linguistic ambiguity.

Neves (2005), asserts that history shows that subtitling has been a visible form of accessibility to audiovisual texts ever since the early days of silent movies, when translation was called intertitles. She adds that either in the form of interlingual or of intralingual subtitles, "written renderings of speech have allowed many people throughout the world to understand messages that would otherwise be partially or totally inaccessible for reasons such as not knowing the language of the original text or not being able to hear or perceive sound".(p.17).

Tomaszkiewicz (2006:69), cited in Panek (2009:8), states that no matter whether it is intralingual or interlingual translation, the sense of the target text should have the same communicative effect as the source text. She lists the following differences between these two types:

1) The number of authors: interlingual translation usually has different authors, while intralingual translation has usually the same author who uses paraphrase to explain a concept or a phenomenon in different words.
2) The text size: in intralingual translation, a paraphrase is often shorter than a typical translation proper.
3) The time of creation: there might be a discrepancy in the time of text creation. In intralingual translation, it may be created at almost the same time as the original, but in interlingual translation the resulting translated text can be produced a long time after the source text (ibid).

Tomaszkiewicz (ibid) continues to say that intra-semiotic translation occurs when something in one system of signs is explained in another system of signs. This is performed in two directions.

1) There can be a written description of people seen in a photo
2) Or the photo can make what is written visual.

This concept can be exemplified by pictograms conveying unambiguous language information in airports or in the street (ibid)

Rietveld (2008:23) argues that "understanding humor and producing humor are two distinct procedures" and that understanding humor does not necessarily "imply the appreciation of humor". She argues that the translator must recognize the humor so that he can try to create a humorous translation equivalent, to an extent to, the original.

2.3 **Purpose of the Study**

The study attempts to investigate the different problems facing the subtitler of humor on television, and find solutions to those problems by setting an appropriate lay-out of translation strategies and tools that could be adopted for the audiovisual translation in general and the translation of humor for subtitling in particular, in order to make the subtitled humor presentable, comprehensible and legible to the viewer.

The study also aims at proving that humor could be translated for subtitling, though some limitations in the scope of expectations for this aim are available.

No matter how the process of inserting the subtitles into the film body mentioned beforehand seems complicated, the most difficult part of it is

translating the dialogue. The translator for subtitling has to bear in mind that each line of verbal dialogue, will have to be in synchronization with the subtitles that appear on screen for a maximum time of 3-4 seconds. They will have to come in short sentences that will occupy a specific space and place on screen, otherwise they will have to appear on sentence that appears next. This will result in some of the poor subtitles, in having the actor say something, while the subtitle is still hanging behind, interpreting the previous sentence in the dialogue. A total loss of meaning and misinterpreting, consequently a failure in translation, will be the result. The audience who are usually non native speakers of the language or ignorant of it, will no longer be following the sequence of scenes, nor of the dialogue. A total loss of meaning is the result of bad translation.

2.4 Statement of the problem

When it comes to humor translation for subtitling, the process becomes more difficult and more challenging. The rhythm of comedy programmes is quicker than other genres of programes. The puns provided are always so difficult to interpret on the intra-lingual level, let alone the inter-lingual level. The cultural aspect of the jokes and associations to the ironical situation may create a further bigger challenge to the translator.

Translating cultural and linguistic oriented humor, as well as the spontaneous kind of humor, gives rise to major problems that challenge the translator.

Puns in any language are a unique part of that language; transferring it to another language may be one of the hardest tasks for a translator.

Subtitling, on the other hand, adds even more difficulties to the task. The translator's role of rewriting the script for the purpose of subtitling into

another language is another hindrance that is added to the whole dilemma.

When we translate humor from English into Arabic for subtitling, we combine the problems arising from the ability to understand humor and the word-play used to create humor, along with the translation and subtitling more process with the restrictions of time and space available for showing the subtitles on screen.

2.5 Significance of the Study

Humor, as an everyday phenomenon, is increasingly a part of the context of intercultural communication. In different ways, humor appears to be one of the most defining aspects of humanity. It is also a vehicle for mass entertainment, as television nowadays offers a wide variety of entertaining programs, both feature films and TV series. Translators face the task of attempting to translate seemingly untranslatable humor, and at the same time, not reduce the meaning effect. This task, always, tests their capability for finding creative solutions for such a problem.

Studies in this field will always be needed, to cope up with the massive exposure to the humor through the television programmes broadcast on plenty of television channels available to the viewer. This unavoidable exposure to other cultures, along with the growing possibility of being exposed to it actually by travelling or meeting foreigners, increases the need to understand more issues about the culture including humor.

2.6 Method

2.6.1 Data collection

Different comedy programmes, movies, sitcoms, cartoons have been viewed. Some humorous utterances have been chosen to cover the different kinds of humor analyzed in the current thesis. These kinds include: irony, parody, wordplay (puns), culture-oriented humor, language-oriented humor and universal humor. Examples of translatable and untranslatable humor will be presented for the purpose of this thesis.

The excerpts chosen have been approved by the supervisor to insure their appropriateness for the purpose of the current research and that they are sufficient to cover the scope of the study.

2.6.2 Sources of the Data of the Study

This section is a brief description of the television programmes used in the study. The excerpts used will be discussed later in the chapter in the data analysis section.

1) **Clue**

A film produced in the 1950s, the characters and plot are drawn from the popular Parker Brothers board game of the same name. On a dark and stormy night in 1954, six individuals with ties to Washington are assembled for a dinner party at the swanky mansion of Mr. Boddy. Mr. Boddy's butler, Wadsworth, assigns each guest a colorful name: Mr. Green Col. Mustard, Mrs. Peacock, Professor Plum, Miss Scarlet, and Mrs. White . Two additional servants, the Cook and Yvette, the maid, assist Wadsworth as he informs the guests that they have been gathered to meet the man who has

been blackmailing them (Mr. Boddy). When Boddy turns up dead, however, the guests must try to figure out who killed him so they can protect their own reputations and keep the body count from growing.

http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/clue

2) The Simpsons

The Simpsons is an American animated sitcom created by Matt Groening for the Fox Broadcasting Company. The series is a satirical parody of a middle class American lifestyle epitomized by its family of the same name, which consists of Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie. The show is set in the fictional town of Springfield and parodies American culture, society, television and many aspects of the human condition.The show's humor turns on cultural references that cover a wide spectrum of society so that viewers from all generations can enjoy the show. Such references, for example, come from movies, television, music, literature, science, and history.] The animators also regularly add jokes or sight gags into the show's background via humorous or incongruous bits of text in signs, newspapers, and elsewhere.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_simpsons#cite_note-referential-88

3) The Daily Show

The Daily Show with Jon Stewart is an American late night satirical television program airing each Monday through Thursday on Comedy Central and, in Canada, The Comedy Network. The half-hour long show premiered on July 21, 1996. Jon Stewart took over as host in January 1999, making the show more strongly focused on politics and the national

media. It is currently the longest running program on Comedy Central, and has won 18 Primetime Emmy Awards. Describing itself as a fake news program, *The Daily Show* draws its comedy and satire from recent news stories, political figures, media organizations, and often, aspects of the show itself. The show typically opens with a long monologue from Jon Stewart relating to recent headlines and frequently features exchanges with one or more of several correspondents, who adopt absurd or humorously exaggerated takes on current events against Stewart's straight man persona. The final segment is devoted to a celebrity interview, with guests ranging from actors and musicians to nonfiction authors and political figures.

4) Airplane

Airplane is a 1980 American satirical comedy film directed and written by David Zucker. The film is a parody of the disaster film genre, particularly the 1957 Paramount film *Zero Hour!*, from which it borrows the plot and the central characters. The film is known for its use of absurd and fast-paced slapstick comedy, including visual and verbal puns and gags. Ex-fighter pilot and taxi driver Ted Striker became traumatized during an unnamed war, leading to a pathological fear of flying. As a result, he is unable to hold a responsible job. His wartime girlfriend, Elaine now a stewardess, leaves him. Striker nervously boards a flight from Los Angeles to Chicago on which she is serving, hoping to win her back, but she rebuffs him. After dinner is served, many of the passengers fall ill, and fellow passenger Dr. Rumack deduces that the passengers have contracted food poisoning from the fish. The cockpit crew,

including pilot and co-pilot, have also been affected, leaving no one to fly the plane.. Rumack convinces Ted to fly the plane, though Ted feels unable to handle the pressure and the unfamiliar aircraft. Ted is overcome by stress and can only land the plane after a pep talk from Rumack. Ted managed to safely land the plane with only minor injuries to some passengers. Ted's courage rekindles Elaine's love for him.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airplane (date of access 25/12/2012)

5) Scary movie 4

Scary Movie 4 is a 2006 horror comedy parody film and the fourth film of the *Scary Movie* franchise. This film marks the final *Scary Movie* appearances of the main stars, and concludes the original stories with the other films in the series; *Scary Movie 4* parodies a wide array of movies and television shows.

- *Saw (franchise)* – Billy the Puppet is the parody antagonist.
  - *Saw* – the opening scene with Shaq, Dr. Phil and the Billy puppet. The same set would be reused in future installments of the actual franchise.
  - *Saw II* – Cindy and Brenda both wear Venus Flytraps, and Cindy must retrieve a key hidden behind her eye.
- *The Village* – Main parody
- *The Grudge* – Main parody
- *War of the Worlds* – Central parody
- *Million Dollar Baby* – Cindy's boxing match against a female Mike Tyson.
- *Hustle & Flow* – Cindy's brief first marriage.

- *Scooby-Doo* – Cindy unmasks "the creatures", discovering Old Lady Henderson and Pig Face Joe
- *The Oprah Winfrey Show* – Tom Cruise's "jumping the couch" incident.
- President Bush's 9/11 book reading incident – President Harris listening to a girl reading a book about a duck at the Edna Penhall Elementary School, while being informed about the alien attacks.
- *Final Destination* - James Earl Jones is run over by a passing bus while he narrates mankind's victory through love, similar to Amanda Detmer's character in the film.
- *King Kong* – Kong is featured on

2.6.3 Analysis Model

1) A brief description of the programmes viewed is presented.
2) A description of the scene within which the humorous utterance occurs is then given.
3) A description of the kind of humor within the framework of the theories of humor is presented.
4) A proposed translation/ subtitling is then analyzed in the framework of the translation /subtitling theories presented in the study and in terms of the success in rendering the humorous effect intended by the SL utterance.

Chapter Three

Findings, Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Introduction

The problems which face the translator in the subtitling of humor are analyzed here, according to the type of humor to which they belong, ranging between the simpler to the more problematic. A brief discription of the television programmes and films used in the study is presented in the next section. Attention is paid to the following: **irony, the absurd** and **unexpected**, **culture-specific humor**, **language-specific humor**, **wordplay** (**homonymy, homophony, paronymy, homography**) and **parody**. Some humorous utterances may of course pertain to more than one category.

The strategies used in subtitling in general and subtitling humor in particular will first be discussed in the next section.

3.2 strategies used in subtitling Humor

When attempting to translate a programme for subtitling, the subtitler faces many constraints that Gottlieb (1992:166) describes as: "stepping stones in the river of transmission". Generally speaking," in subtitling, the subtitler transcodes the dialog into equally stripes of signs, conveying semantic and stylistic information" (ibid). The following techniques and strategies are suggested by Gottlieb:

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1) **Expansion**: a strategy used when the original text requires an explanation because of some cultural nuance not retrievable in the target language.

2) **Paraphrase**: is resorted to in case where the original text cannot be reconstructed in the same syntactic way in the target language expressions are altered to enable the translation.
3) **Transfer**: refers to the strategy of translating the source text completely and accurately.
4) **Imitation**: maintains the same forms, typically with names of people and places.
5) **Transcription** is used in those cases where a term is unusual even in the source text, for example, the use of a third language or nonsense language.
6) **Dislocation** is adopted when the original employs some sort of special effect, e.g., a silly song in a cartoon film where the translation of the effect is more important than the content.
7) **Condensation** would seem to be the typical strategy used, that is, the shortening of the text in the least obtrusive way possible. The loss implied in this kind is only the loss of "redundant oral language features like qualifiers, connectives, detailed syntax, and question tags.
8) **Decimation** is an extreme form of condensation where perhaps for reasons of discourse speed, even potentially important elements are omitted.
9) **Deletion** refers to the total elimination of parts of a text.
10) **Resignation** describes the strategy adopted when no translation solution can be found and meaning is inevitably lost.

Gottlieb (1992:166).

3.3 Data Analysis

In this section the selected data will be analyzed to show the kind of humor they include and the suitable strategy used in translating them,

then the translation is examined to investigate the success in rendering the humor effect as intended by the original programme .

3.3.1 Irony in translation

To start, let us examine the following example from *The Daily Show* aired on March 16, 2010. It is a segment about the bipartisan effort between Senators Chris Dodd and Bob Corker to help solve the economic crisis of 2008. John Stewart criticizes the fact that it has taken them a long time to create a legislation to prevent a new recession. Stewart then pretends to be hopeful about the power of the new legislation, but his line is immediately followed by a clip of Senator Dodd saying that the legislation will not have that power:

Example (1):

Original script – The Daily Show	**Arabic Translation**
Stewart: "It's taken you idiots two years	ستيوارت: احتجتم أيها الأغبياء، إلى عامين
during the worst financial collapse since the Great Depression	خلال أسوأ أزمة اقتصادية منذ الكساد العظيم
to compile a list of regulations we should have put into place the next day?	لتسنوا تشريعات كان عليكم اقرارها خلال يوم ؟
Well, better late than never I guess	حسنا، أن تأتي متأخرا خير من أن لا تأتي
At least now we can have some legislation ***that will/ stop the next crisis from occurring***	**فعلى الأقل يمكن لهذه التشريعات أن تمنع حصول أزمة اقتصادية جديدة**
Dodd: This legislation ***will not stop the next crisis from coming****.*	دود: هذه التشريعات **لن تمنع حصول أزمة اقتصادية جديدة**

In this example Dodd's utterance immediately echoes Stewart's, and that repetition comically shatters Stewart’s hopes. This repetition creates an **ironical** effect, thus a humorous one.

The translation strategy proposed by the researcher for subtitling this example is **transfer** which translates the utterances literally and in the same order as in the original, the ironical effect is left to the receiver-viewers to understand as it was originally intended by producers of the programme. The reaction on Stewart's face after hearing the last sentence shows clearly the frustration he felt or in fact intended, thus the humorous effect is kept as intended.

Another example of irony is found in the movie Clue in a conversation between Colonel Mustard and Mrs. White about admitting being the killer.

Example 2:

Original script- Clue Movie	**Arabic Translation**
MUSTARD: There is only one admitted killer here, and it is certainly not me, it is her!	مستارد :هناك شخص واحد فقط اعترف بانه قاتل، ولم أكن أنا بالتأكيد . انها هي
Mrs. White: I've admitted nothing.	السيدة وايت: لم أعترف بأي شيء
MUSTARD: Well, you paid the blackmail. How many husbands have you had?	مستارد: حسنا لقد دفعت المال للمبتز كم زوجا كان لك؟
Mrs. White: Mine or other	السيدة وايت :أزواجي ام ازواج غيري

women's?	
MUSTARD: Yours.	مستارد: ازواجك
Mrs. White: Five	السيدة وايت: خمسة
MUSTARD: Five.	
Mrs. White: Yes, just the five. Husbands should be like Kleenex.	السيدة وايت : خمسة فقط يجب ان يكون الازواج كالمناديل الورقية
Soft, strong, and disposable.	السيدة وايت : ناعمة وقوية ويمكن التخلص منها

Colonel Mustard has just had a conversation with Mrs. White after accusing her of the cook's murder, basing his accusation on the suspicious disappearance of one of her husbands and the death of another, commenting that Mrs. White had been involved in murder before. Mrs. White attempts to defend herself against the accusations with witty mockery.

This remark compares the qualities of husbands to the qualities of (Kleenex) paper tissues, utilizing irony to compare the practical aspects of tissues to the emotional and practical aspects of Mrs. White's ideal husband. The brand name "**Kleenex**" was substituted by (**المناديل الورقية**) to avoid having a subtitling with unfamiliar brand name to some viewers and it would still show the **ironical** remark Mrs. White wants to convey. **Condensation** was used in the subtitle ((**خمسة فقط**) which is obviously shorter that (yes just the five) and it still conveys the ironical message intended by Mrs. White. **Deletion** was used to save space when the word five (**خمسة**) was translated only once as it would be obvious that the word is said two times so one subtitle is enough, specially that the second (**five**) is pronounced immediately after the first one.

3.3.2 Culture-specific humor

The difficulty of translating culture-specific humor can range from easy to almost untranslatable. They can be culture-bound for a variety of reasons: because they allude to a person, thing, event, or work of art known only to the source-culture; or because the type of humor itself is well received in the Source Culture (SC) but not in the Target Culture (TC). ***The Daily Show*** uses varieties of humor that contain events and personalities that they deal with are very specific to American culture. Many of the references can only be understood by Americans at a given moment in time because they have to do with current affairs and events. Let us consider the following from the Daily Show aired on November 1st 2012:

Example (3)

Original scrip – Clue movie	**Arabic Translation**
Things are getting back to normal in small measures …..	لقد عادت الحياة إلى طبيعتها قليلا.
This morning in fact a crazy man was outside my window yelling we're all are gonna die	وهذا الصباح كان هناك رجل مجنون يصرخ خلف نافذتي سوف نموت جميعا.
Ah, it was Mayor **Bloomberg**……..	...كان ذلك الرجل هو رئيس البلدية **بلومبيرغ**...
It was him yea …and he was not talking about the storm	نعم كان هو...ولم يكن يتحدث عن العاصفة

He was talking about **trans-fats**	بل كان يتحدث عن الدهون المشبعة...
…..so everything was coming around fine	إذن يبدو ان كل شيء عاد الى طبيعته...

The episode was aired only a short time after the Hurricane Sandy hit in the State of New York, in the United States. Of course, the news about hurricane (Sandy) was all over the television stations all over the world. In the above example, if the audience does not have information about the United States and what happened there, they will not be able to understand the humor implied. Mayor Bloomberg (of New York city has been fighting the use of trans-fats, the fats used by most fast-food restaurants because they are considered deadly fats responsible for a high number of deaths a year from heart diseases. In this example, the humor is triggered when Stewart states ironically that we know everything is back to normal because mayor Bloomberg is now back to his normal daily activity of fighting trans-fats, now that the state is no longer in danger of the Sandy striking again and the storm is no longer in focus . After making fun of the mayor and his restless campaign against trans-fats, Stewart asserts that the city is back to normal life because the mayor is back to his daily activities of relentlessly fighting trans-fats.

The subtitling strategies used here is **transfer** translating the excerpt completely and accurately. **Condensation** is used in the first and second utterances for space and time considerations.

The humor intended here is culture specific and is related to certain people, events and activities that cannot be understood unless the audience is familiar with them. So the translation retained every cultural

reference and left it to the receivers to understand the irony. **Explanation** would have helped a lot in this example but time and space limit the use of this strategy.

Another example of the culture specific humor can be found in the following excerpt from the (Daily Show) with John Stewart, the episode was aired on November 1st 2012:

Example (4)

Original Scrip- The Daily Show	**Arabic Translation**
Stewart: Can you imagine a hellish of apocalyptic reality, Where all you can see are political ads	أيمكنكم تخيل جحيم واقعنا الغامض حيث كل ما نراه من حولنا هو إعلانات سياسية
Imagine it… I wrote a screenplay about it (Cleveland Field)….	تخيلوا الامر... لقد كتبت نص فيلم حول ذلك بعنوان (كليفلاند فيلد) ....
J.J. Abrams (whispering) call me	جاي جاي ابرامز(هامساً) ... اتصل بي.

In this example again, we see reference to certain places people and works of art that no outsider who is now well acquainted with the source language culture would understand it.

This episode was aired during the Presidential elections campaign in the state of Ohio a state among the Swing states, states that could change the balance and the results in the elections so all the candidates would try to win as much votes as they can in these states. The competition is hectic

and political adds covering every building in the city. Stewart is referring to a well known American film and television producer (J.J. Abrams) who has directed many films. Among those films is American Monster horror thriller film **(Cloverfield),** which follows six young New Yorkers attending a going-away party on the night that a gigantic monster attacks the city. All the information about that night was retrieved from the footage found on a camera that the department of defense found on scene. The resemblance made here is between the invasion of the gigantic monster and the invasion of the political ads banners which covers almost every wall in the city of Cleveland. There is also a parody between the title of the original film and the title Stewart has chosen for his film (he shows a script of the film where the title is clearly seen), and asks J.J. Abrams the producer to call him as the situation in the city is a potential good idea for a film as good as the original successful film produced originally by Abrams.

The strategy used is (imitation) where each utterance is subtitled using literal translation. The first part of the scene shown is an ironical utterance and is clearly understood by the aid of the visual track which shows a picture of the political ads banners covering the city, the problem is in the second part where a reference to places and people in the source culture is made. The subtitler cannot add any information to **explain** but then **explanation** is not possible because of the constraints of subtitling where we do not have the luxury of time and space to add information about what is being said on screen. In fact **condensation** is used in this translation to keep up with the quick pace of the programme. So it is left to the audience to understand the irony in the utterance, though they could miss the parody in the second part because of lack acquaintance of the cultural reference.

3.3 language-Specific Humor

3.1.1 Wordplay

a. Homonymy

An example of homonymy is from the series (The Simpsons*)* season 18 from, an episode titled *Stop or my dog will shoot.* The Simpsons are attending a harvest festival and the family has decided to try and find their way through a cornfield maze, the "amazing maize maze" as it was called. The other family members have found their way out of the maze, but Homer is still inside. Night has already fallen and the police have come over to help Homer. They have brought a trail dog along.

Example (5):

Original- The Simpsons – Stop or my dog will shoot	***Arabic Translation***
CHIEF WIGGUM: Say hello to officer Jaws. *CONSTABLE LOU: Chief, I'm afraid officer Jaws is guilty of littering.*	المقدم واغوم: الق التحية على الضابط جوز الشرطي لو : سيدي، يؤسفني القول أن الضابط جوز متهم بإلقاء المهملات (الفضلات) .
*And here's the **litter**.* *(Constable Lou presents officer Jaws's litter of puppies)*	وها هي السلة.

In this example, there is playing with the homonymy of the word *litter* as in garbage and as in the offspring of an animal (puppies in this example).

The image of the dog's litter, as well as the sound of the barking puppies elicits the secondary meaning of the word litter.

Yet this homonymy can only be recognized in English and cannot be rendered into Arabic as we cannot find two Arabic homonymous words that would give both meanings as the word (litter), therefore a proposed technique will be either to skip the translation of the wordplay which will mean that the audience will lose part of the intended effect in the original language and might notice that the translator failed to translate the humorous utterance especially if the programme has a laugh track as the case in sitcoms and that the audience do understand the source language even a little.

Another proposed technique would be to translate the word play using a different wordplay that would be close enough to the original source language wordplay. The following translation is a proposed solution for this problem:



The visual track comes to the aid in this example as the above picture shows Constable Lou offering a kind of a straw basket full of puppies to officer Jaws. The co-relation between the Arabic word (سلّة) and (مهملات) as in (سلة مهملات) renders some of the intended wordplay in the original language though it does not fully do that.

b. Homophony

Gottlieb (1997:217) asserts that homophony is often considered too language specific to be retained in translation and that "some languages may even offer more cases of homophony than other languages". He adds that any two specific words that sound alike in any source language will possibly sound more differently in any target language involved.

An example of this kind of wordplay comes from the movie (**Airplane**). The scene is inside a plane which is up in the air the pilot and his co-pilot are both dead after eating fish. There is only one person on board the plane who has a little knowledge of flying a plane. The following dialogue takes place between him and a doctor who has, somehow, taken over control of the situation:

Example (7)

Can you fly this plane and land it?	هل يمكنك قيادة هذه الطائرة والهبوط بها؟
Surely you can't be serious?	من المؤكد انك لست جادا؟
I am serious, and don't call me Shirley	بلى، ولا تخاطبني هكذا.

In this scene we notice the similarity in the pronunciation and also in spelling between the adverb (surely), and the name (Shirley) which is a clear case of homophony. This kind of homophonic words is too language specific and cannot easily be rendered in translation because there are no two words in target language Arabic that would give the same homophonic relationship as the two words in the source language English. The technique used would be to skip the translation of this homophony and translate the other parts of the utterances as follows:

The above translation does not retain the humorous effect that is created by the homophony between the two words surely and shirly the same way as in the source language because the name shirly is a woman's name and the person addressed is a man who resents being called shirly as he thought he was called. The word play which created humor is lost in translation. Yet the researcher proposes the following translation in which the homophony in the source language (English) is rendered into a homonymy in the target language (Arabic) is presented:

Example (8)

Can you fly this plane and land it?	هل يمكنك قيادة هذه الطائرة والهبوط بها؟
Surely *you can't be serious?*	أمتأكد أنت بأنك **جاد**؟
I am serious, and don't call me ***Shirley***	أجل، ولا تنادني **جاد**

In this proposed translation the homophony in the source language is hopefully retained by another wordplay (homonymy) between the Arabic Adjective (جاد) meaning serious and the common name (جاد) which could create a humorous effect, and though it is not similar to the target language intended humor at least the subtitler does not leave the utterances un-translated to prevent the confusion that might occur to the audience because they hear the dialogue but not see the subtitles especially if they have a convenient command of the source language.

Another example of homophony can be found in The *Simpsons*. This example is from season 18, an episode titled *Stop or my dog will shoot.* The Simpsons are at a harvest festival held in Springfield. They walk around the carnival area. At the edge of a cornfield there is a sign that says:

Example (9)

The a-maize-ing *MAIZE MAZE*	متاهة حقل الذرة **المدهشة**
"Betchacan't solve our maze!"	**أتحداك** أن تحاول **الخروج** منها

Here the writers of the episode play on the homophony of the words maize and maze. The word maize is also embedded in a new version of the word 'amazing' as *a-maizeing*, making the two words homophones as well.

Attempting to translate this excerpt is not an easy one; in fact it could be almost an Impossible one. In Arabic the translation of Amazing is (مدهش) , the translation of Maize is (ذرة), while the translation of Maze is (يحير يدهش،يذهل). Following is a proposed translation:

Of course the homophony is lost in translation, yet the use of the word (متاهة) implicates the existence of an amazing situation facing our heroes, the use of the word (حقل) might trigger the sense of ampleness or capaciousness, a big space where the person could feel lost as if in a maze. The humor intended in the original text is not rendered in full in the translation.

c. **Paronymy:**

Paronymy occurs when two expressions pronounced or spelt almost in nearly the same way. They share close resemblance, but there are slight differences in both spelling and sound. An example of this can be found in the following scene from (the Simpsons) season one an episode titled (Lisa the Beauty queen)**.** Lisa is taking part in the beauty queen pageant and it now time to judge the personality of the contestants which is conducted by (Krusty) the clown.

Example (10)

Krusty : This is my favorite part of the pageant because….	كرستي: هذا هو الجزء المفضل لدي في المسابقة لأنني......
What does it say….	ما هذه الكلمة..
*Oh it gives me a chance to visit with the girls' **personality**…*	آه...لانني سأحصل على فرصة للتعرف على شخصية الفتيات...

Eh.. ***personally***.	اعني التعرف على الفتيات ...شخصيا.

In this example, Krusty is reading from a screen (a prompter) and he cannot see very well, so he misses reading the key word in his line. He first reads it ***personality*** and then corrects himself and reads it ***personally***. Trying to render this kind of wordplay in Arabic seems easier than the other kinds. Sometimes, like in the above example, the words share the same root and could be rendered into two words that share the same root in the target language as follows:

Analyzing this example shows two kinds of wordplay. The first is homonymy which occurs by using the phrasal verb (**visit with**) in two senses: the first is (**talk with**) and the other is biblical (**make suffer for parents failings**) which refer to the difficulties the girls face in beauty pageants. The other wordplay is a paronymy which appears in the use of the two words (**personality**) and (**personally**). These two kinds of wordplay are recognized in the source language only. In the Target Language (**Arabic**), only one kind of wordplay is recognized between the two words (**شخصية**) and (**شخصيا**).

To render the humor in this example, two strategies were used. First we used paraphrasing, by changing the phrasal verb (visit with) into the noun (التعرف) in Arabic. The second strategy used was expansion in the last utterance, which is obviously longer than the original. This expansion helped in creating a homophony by repeating the phrase (التعرف على الفتيات) and then add the word (شخصية) which is a paronymy of (شخصيا) .

Another example of paronymy comes from the Simpsons season 15 an episode titled (*Tis the fifteenth season*). Homer is suffering from insomnia. He is lying on the sofa, watching television. Soon he falls asleep and starts having nightmares. He sees his own tombstone on the television screen with the following text engraved on it:

Example 11:

Original script- the Simpsons	**Arabic Translatrion**
Homer Simpson, unloved by All	هومر سيمبسون – كان الكل يكرهه
Homer reads the text aloud, horrified. *HOMER: Homer Simpson, unloved by Al, no!*	هومر: هومر سيمبسون – كان (آل) يكرهه. لا
Homer notices that he misread the engraving the first time and reads it aloud again, this time correctly. *HOMER: Homer Simpson, unloved by All, no.*	هومر: هومر سيمبسون – كان الكل يكرهه. لا

Here the writers are playing with the paronymy between the pronoun (**all**) and the proper name (**Al**) (one of the characters in the series and a friend of homer). the researcher used the (imitation) translation strategy. The paronymy between Al the name and All the pronoun was retained in using (**الكل**) and the transcription of the name(**Al**) by using (**آل**) which is close in pronounciation to (**الكل**).

d. Homography

Homography describes the situation when two words are spelled identically but there is a difference in sound.

The following example is again from *The Simpsons*. This example is from season 12, an episode titled *HOMER:*

In this episode, Homer Simpson tries his luck at the stock market and as a result loses a large amount of the family's funds. Homer and Marge try to figure out what to do.

Example (12):

Original Script - The Simpsons - "Homer"	**Arabic Subtitling**
HOMER: I have a great way to solve our money woes. *You rent your womb to a rich childless couple.* *If you agree, signify by getting indignant.*	هومر: لدي طريقة رائعة لحل مشاكلنا المالية. قومي بتأجير (رحمك) الى زوجين غنيين بلا أولاد. ان كنت موافقة ، فاظهري ذلك بان تغضبي
MARGE: Are you crazy? I'm not going to be a surrogate mother.	مارج: هل جننت؟ لن أصبح أما بديلة
HOMER: C'mon, Marge, we're a team. It's (uter-US), not (uter-YOU).	هومر: (الرحمة) يا مارج انه (رحمنا) وليس (رحمك) لوحدك

In this example, the words ***uterus*** meaning (womb) and uter-US as Homer uses it are homographs. Their spelling would be identical. Homer here pronounces the word so that it Suits his purposes better. In Homer's version, the word contains the pronoun us trying to convince Marge to bear part of the responsibility and agree to rent her (uterus) and gain money.

Attempting to translate this kind of wordplay, we face the problem of finding words in the Arabic Language to give the two meanings and be homographs at the same time. Such a word does not exist.

The proposed translation yet can use a strategy of changing the word play into no-wordplay;

In the above translation the homography between the two utterance (***uterus***) and (***Uter-Us***) as home pronounce it, is untranslatable to a direct homography. So by using the word (mercy) (***الرحمة***) which is close in pronunciation and in meaning, the humorous effect intended in by showing how eager and desperate homer was to convince Marge of selling her uterus to get money and solve their financial problems. Both words share the root verb: (***رحِمَ***). (*Al-Mo'jam Alwaseet*) Arabic to Arabic Dictionary cites the following meaning for the word (رَحِمْ)

الرَحِمْ: موضع تكوين الجنين ووعائه في البطن
الرَحْمَة: الخير والنعمة
الرَحوم: الكثير الرحمة(للمذكر والمؤنث)
التي تشتكي رحمها (للمرأة)

Al-Mo'jam Alwaseet:part2 (1972:335)

e. Parody

Examples of Parody on screen are numerous, and the translator may face them in almost every movie or programme that he attempts to subtitle for television. Let us examine the following examples:

This example is from (*Scary Movie 4*) movie. The whole scene is a parody of another famous science fiction movie (*The War of the Worlds*) starring Tom cruise.

Example (13):

That last one was close (lightning stroke)	كانت الضربة الأخيرة قريبة جدا.
Don't worry; Lightning doesn't strike at the same place twice.	لا تقلقي، فالبرق لا يضرب نفس المكان مرتين
Where is Rachel?	أين ريتشل؟
Thought she was with you.	ظننت انها معك
Oh, there you are.	ها أنت ذا

The whole last scene is an exaggerated parody of the movie "war of the world" (2005), which is about a divorced man whose ex-wife brings their children to stay with him for the week end on the night of the aliens invasion of the planet earth and they all spend the whole movie running away from the invaders and sometimes trying to fight back alongside the military people. During the movie they turn out to be in pretty a bad shape and they are always having someone or something on their tail. The translation of this excerpt could be literal leaving it to the visual track to

aid the viewers understand the parody. Attempting to explain the scene is not possible because of the time and space constraints. The knowledge resources and the acquaintance of the parodied film is a very essential factor to understand the parody.

Of course reading the above translation without watching the movie does not trigger any humorous effect. Moreover, watching the movie without having the parodied movie in mind will not trigger the same humorous effect by referring to the events taking place in the original movie. The visual track with the help of the subtitling and the knowledge resources aids the intention of the production and makes the scene humorous to the viewers.

-That last one was close (lightning stroke)

(Rachel is knocking at the glass door shouting and afraid but her father and his girlfriend don't hear her, as they are standing with their backs to the window).



(Rachel is stricken by lightning)



-Don't worry, Lightning don't strike at the same place twice.

(Rachel is stricken by lightning again this time almost vaporizing her)



-Where is Rachel?

-Thought she was with you.

(Rachel comes to the door and they open it and let her in)

-Oh, there you are.



Chapter Four
Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter includes a summary of the present study and concluding remarks. It also offers recommendations for further studies related to the translation of humor for subtitling from English into Arabic.

4.1 Conclusions

The study has analyzed the subtitling of humor on television. It has investigated various theories of analyzing humor as proposed by Raskin (1985) and Attardo (1994). The different theoretical background of translation and Audiovisual Translation has been investigated. Some types of audiovisual translation have been defined with special focus on the subject of the study: Subtitling. Strategies of subtitling have been defined as proposed by Gottlieb (1992) and applied to the data of the current study which has been chosen from different programmes, films and television series.

It has been found that humor is a special kind of language that needs special measures in translation. When humor is found in audiovisual form i.e. in television programs the problem becomes greater as the forms of translation specially subtitling has constraints that add to the dilemma. The constraints found are linguistic, culture specific, and technical.

In subtitling humor from English into Arabic the study has adopted strategies that can be used to solve the problems arising. The strategies ranged between deleting the humorous utterance because no translation

could be found and between the literal rendering of the utterance. In between, paraphrasing has been used to render some long utterances. Expansion has been adopted by using longer sentences in the target language than we have in the source in order to render the humorous effect intended. These strategies have been specially used in translating wordplay

The study found that the culture specific humor is very difficult to subtitle so literal translation has been adopted, and it was left to the audience to understand the intended humor based on their cultural knowledge and recourses related to the humorous utterance. In language specific humor namely wordplay the difficulty is always at its highest levels. It requires the greatest ability from the side of the translator who sometimes is forced to rewrite and create new wordplay, or change one kind of wordplay into another, in order to maintain the humor included and keep the effect intended.

4.2 Recommendations

Humor transmitted on television attracts a wide range of audience who are either ignorant of the original language of the programme, or have little knowledge of it. This requires translating the programme to aid the audience to understand it and fulfill the aim of the communication process intended. This proves that more studies on subtitling humor for television are required.

1) This study has focused on certain kinds of humor like irony, wordplay, and parody. Other studies will be needed on other kinds of humor like satire, and the humor found in works of literature produced for the screen.

2) The constraints of subtitling and their effect on translating humor need to be investigated separately in future studies.

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المستخلص

حداد، فكتوريا سامي، ترجمة الفكاهة على شاشة التلفزيون من الانجليزية إلى العربية، ماجستير ترجمة، قسم الترجمة، جامعة اليرموك، 2013، المشرف الاستاذ الدكتور يوسف بدر.

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى بحث امكانية ترجمة الفكاهة على شاشة التلفزيون. لقد تمت مشاهدة مقتطفات مختارة من عدة مسلسلات وأفلام كوميدية انجليزية ، وتحليليها لمعرفة نوع الفكاهة التي تحتويها ومن ثم اختيار الاستراتيجيات المناسبة لترجمتها . وقد تم تحليل المقتطفات بالرجوع الى نظريات البراغماتية كما تناولها غرايس (1975) ، وأوستن (1962، 1979).وقدمت الدراسة الانواع المختلفة للمشاكل والصعوبات التي يواجهها المترجم عند ترجمة البرامج التلفزيونية وخاصة الفكاهية منها التي تضع المترجم في مواجهة ثلاثة مشاكل اساسية عليه التعامل معها وهي الترجمة والترجمة التلفزيونية والفكاهة. وقد استخدمت النظريات الخاصة بالفكاهة في تحليل المقتطفات كما قدمها راسكين(1985) ، وأتاردو (1994) ، بالرجوع الى قواعد غرايس (1975)، وتم تقديم ترجمة مقترحة من الانجليزية الى العربية من قبل الباحثة. وفي النهاية تم تحليل الترجمة المقترحة لتحديد مدى نجاحها في ايصال الرسالة الاصلية للبرنامج في ضوء المساحة والوقت المتوفرين على شاشة التلفزيون.